36: Niemojowski-- 96-98 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut-1-2
116, 177, 577, 157, 147

" Living for centuries in this desert, and holding no communication whatever with the outside world, except when they come to sell fish and game to the travellers on the Lena, the Yakuts have preserved unimpaired their primitive character. No foreign element has influenced their habits, mode of living, or cus- [97] toms. No trace of civilization appears among them. Quiet , gentle, upright, and extremely patient, they are never the slaves of their passions, never give way to violent feelings of revenge or hate. Cunningness, falseness, and hypocrisy are unknown amongst them. Their word can always be relied upon; their promise is always fulfilled; an assurance once given is faithfully kept. The uprightness of these people is so great that in the annals of their quiet life there has never been an instance of cheating or stratagem, still less of crime. These noble qualities are the gift of Nature; but their incomparable patience is chiefly the result of climate and atmospheric influence.

This opinion is arrived at from general ethnographical considerations. All nations inhabiting the high northern latitudes are distinguished by this same virtue. The characters of Laplanders, Icelanders, and the inhabitants of the rocky confines of Norway bear the marks of this passive, lamb-like patience. The power which tends to level all inward demonstrations is the polar temperature, which congeals every violent motion of the blood, every strong feeling. Under this freezing influence, the rest-[98] lessness inborn in man is calmed, the passions sober down, and the man whose fate made him a

child of these northern latitudes becomes an automaton, impervious alike to cold and to an affront, and bearing with the same equanimity a box on the ear or a snowstorm. Patience which we consider a virtue, because it has its roots in moral power, overcoming tha agitation of the blood, becomes in these children of the North a defect in character. It is impossible not to pity these unfortunates, bearing with angelic patience the abuse and ill-treatment---generally brutal and invariably undeserved--- vented upon them by the small merchants or petty clerks travelling on the Lena. Yet they do not deserve contempt; they do not act thus from any want of self-respect, but rather from an apathy bordering on moral incapacity. They receive alike good or bad with equal faith in the justice of whatever befalls them."

36: Niemojowski --98-99 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut'
116, 157, 609

" It often happens that the monotony of the journey on a raft, the want of occupation, and especially the knowledge of perfect impunity makes low and degraded shopkeepers' assistants, devoid of all feelings of humanity, do things which are beyond practical jokes, and [99] which closely resemble cruelty, but even then the unequalled patience of the Yakuts never forsakes them ."

36: Niemojowski--99-100 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 157

"The following anecdote has been related to me: --

Last year a few men were sent by their masters from Irkoutsk to transact some commercial business in Yakutck. After having finished their land journey, they, as it customary, went on board a raft, and with their guides and wares sailed on the river Lena. This journey appeared monotonous and tiresome to men accustomed to the amusements and dissipations of a large town, so, after having half-emptied the brandy barrel, played cards till they were tired, and given and received a good many bruises in friendly quarrels, they found themselves at the end of their resources, and did not know how to kill the time that still remained to be spent on board. Luckily the Yakuts' yourts found on the banks afforded a pastime much in vogue then. Landing every few hours under the pretext of buying fish or meat, they took the opportunity to annoy in every way the peaceful aborigines sitting quietly outside their huts but all their nice jokes, sometimes physically painful, produced no effect on the patient and gently Yakuts, accustomed [100] to such behaviour. The Yakuts only smiled sweetly, and wished them good-bye kindly and in a friendly manner, as if the Russians had been loading them with favours instead of insulting them incessantly."

36: Niemojowski -- 106 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 156, 224, 226

" The Yakuts are of small stature, thick-set, and awkward in their movements. Naturally of a social disposition, they agree wonderfully amongst themselves. Their occupations, like those of all the Asiatic tribes, are fishing and hunting, fishing generally merely to satisfy their wants, and hunting for the same reason, or to protect themselves from wild animals. They do not experience so much pleasure in these occupations as the other races. They fish and hunt from necessity, not from love of sport. "

36: Niemojowski-- 106-107 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 538, 517

" Their greatest pleasure, especially during the long winter [107]nights, consists in large gatherings in their yourts to listen to long stories related by those among them who are distinguished by their talent in that line "

36: Niemojowski--107-109 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut-1-3
116, 538

" If a traveller, acquainted with the Yakut language or having a good interpreter, finds himself within a yourt at such a time, and flatters himself he has at last come upon a mine of traditions or popular legends, he is soon undeceived, the narratives of the Yakuts being neither history nor legend, nor even imaginative, but merely a conglomeration of the same oft-repeated phrases, illogically put together, and having neither aim nor sequence, neither beginning nor end. The usual theme of these stories is a conversation between a man and various animals, an entirely meaningless conversation in which it is impossible to discover a guiding idea. For instance:--

A man goes, goes, goes (this signifies a long journey , and is repeated several scores of times) and meets a wolf.

'Wolf, where art thou going?'

'In search of food for I am hungry, and my she-wolf is hungry, and my young ones are hungry.'

On hearing this reply, the man again goes, [108] goes, goes (here follows an almost endless repetition of the verb to go) and meets an eagle flying.

'Eagle, where art thou flying?'

'To seek food for I am hungry, and my mate is hungry, and my young ones are hungry.'

And in this way the man meets all the known animals inhabiting these regions, to each

of them he puts the same question, and from each receives the same answer. There is a great variety of animals in the forests, and the narrator feels bound not to omit a single one, from the reindeer down to the scarcely perceptible midge. For this reason the talk lasts for several hours, and yet the audience never appear tired of hearing the incessant repetition of the same phrases, and seem to hang on the words proceeding from the lips of the narrator.

A stranger listening to one of these stories is constantly expecting that the end of a Yakut's tale will show some meaning or carry some slight suspicion of a moral lesson, in fact, have some meaning; he rejoices in the hope that the man who is always going, and receives from all the animals he meets the same answer, will at last bethink himself that he too ought to imitate the four-footed or winged informants and seek [109] to support his wife. But no! the end of the story is as meaningless as the beginning, or, to speak more accurately, it has no end. The man who has been going so long at last stops, and -- there is no end.

One of the Irkoutsk merchants who related this to me, finding himself once in a yourt while some such narrative was going on, and seeing that the story-teller abruptly cut the thread of his discourse, asked,

'Well, the man went, and went, and stopped, and what then?'

'Then,' shyly answered the confused bard, 'then nothing, he stands, and that is all.'

36: Niemojowski--107-109 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut-3
116, 538

The Yakuts have about a score of similar themes to fill up the winter nights, but they are all of the same pattern, and the only difference is in another set of phrases being used. "

36: Niemojowski-- 109-110 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 157, 609

"The sociability of the Yakuts, springing from their kind-hearted and gentle characters, would render them easily amenable to the benefits of civilization were it not for their extraordinary shyness and almost servile humility; considering men of other races, and especially Europeans, as being superior in every respect to themselves, they dare not compare themselves with them even in thought, and imagine that the [110] very idea of trying to imitate them is unpardonable impudence. If they listen respectfully to the insulting jokes of a wandering pedlar, or submit meekly to painful usage from drunken shopmen, it is not from cowardice or fear, but from the firm conviction of their own inferiority. Endowed by nature with indomitable courage, they are fearless in the presence of danger. It is a fine sight to see these short, thick-set men when the fierce and ravenous wolves attack their settlements; armed with spear or axe they valiantly defend their wives, children, and possessions; the expression of their countenance usually so gentle changes marvellously; their gentle eyes gleam with ardour; the features, generally characterized by a friendly smile, assume a look of cool energy and steadfastness. These unfortunate people, accustomed to all sorts of humiliations, who are made the sport of any low European drunkard, then suddenly rise to the level of heroes."

36: Niemojowski--110-112 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut 1-2
116, 609

"If the Yakuts who inhabit this part of their immense country, (1) accustomed as they

1. The Yakutsh province is 74,153 German square miles, it is therefore nearly eight times as large as France.

are to the sight of Europeans from time to time on the [111] banks of the Lena, are yet so shy with strangers, what are we to say as regards those of them who inhabit the eastern parts beyond the town of Yakutck towards Kamtschatka? There the appearance of a stranger is an epoch in the annals of the country. The traveller, whom chance brings into these parts so distant from all European settlements, is looked upon almost as a supernatural being to whose merest whim everything must give way. I have known several persons whose fate it was to travel through these eastern parts of Siberia, and they all agreed in giving the Yakuts the highest praise for their behaviour. The best fish, the most comfortable huts, and the choicest venison were always reserved for the guests, but in spite of this disinterested hospitality, this good-nature, ready to gratify the slightest wish, the travellers still considered themselves less happy than when amongst races who had less adoration for Europeans; for, though having everything that goodwill and boundless generosity could supply, they lacked what the heart and soul require, the social bond uniting man with man.

36: Niemojowski--110-112 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut-2
116. 609

The kindness shown to them was always so mingled with veneration and worship that it failed to satisfy men accustomed to see in other [112]men a fellow-creature and a brother: and not to be themselves elevated on a pedestal. They were approached with timidity, all their wishes were obeyed with alacrity, and the new-comer, finding himself a distinct item in a serving, bowing multitude, felt like the phoenix in the old story, unhappy because he could not find another being like himself."

36: Niemojowski-- 112 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 177

"These : [RCH: the Yakuts inhabiting the capital] have built themselves houses in the European style, and adopted European habits and customs, retaining only their language; having got rid of all their former ways, they seem to cling all the more strongly to this dialect, so much so, that to this day it is almost impossible to be understood in Yakutck unless speaking the language of the country."

36: Niemojowski-- 180 T-2 (no date) 1883 Yakut
116, 144

" It is probable that in ancient times Siberia was occupied by hordes of Chukchas, Finns, and Kirghiz, and that the two most populous races inhabiting there at the present day, viz. : the Mongolians, from whom sprang the Tartars and the Yakuts, and the Mantchur, the ancestors of the present Gilliacks, Sayans, and Tunguz, have come from the west and south during this change in the religious ideas, and having mingled with the previous settlers, gave rise to the present varieties."